(c) and (d) The principal manufacturing unit of sodium s-tibo gluconate drug have been advised to increase the production of this drug for treatment of Kala-Azar.

Promotion of Health

3078. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in developed countries, more attention is being given to promotion of health than to medical services;

(b) whether there is any proposal to introduce a nutrition programme as done by the Tamil Nadu Government in the nutritive noon meal scheme and the free nutritive weaning food scheme so that health care is covered up to the poor people to an extent; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) The Government is aware that prevention of diseases and promotion of health deserve serious attention.

(b) and (c) There is at present no concrete proposal to implement a Mid-day Meal Programme for elementary school children throughout the country. However, to improve average consumption of nutrients in the vulnerable groups, Government of India have initiated a number of programmes:

(i) Supplementary feeding programme under the scheme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is implemented to fill the critical calorie gap in pre-school children and women during pregnancy and lactation.

(ii) Vitamin A distribution programme to prevent Vitamin 'A' deficiency in pre-school children (1-5 years).

(iii) Distribution of Iron and Folic Acid Tablets programmes (Anaemia, Prophylaxis programme):— distribution of Iron and Folic Acid Tablets to pregnant and lactating women and children upto 10 years and to family planning acceptors.

Thalassemia genes

3079. SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 25 million of healthy carriers of thalassemia gene;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there every year nearly 9,000 children are born with thalassemia major and die mostly undiagnosed due to poor or non-availability of treatment facilities;

(c) what steps are being taken to create awareness about this dreaded disease and screening of high risk groups to prevent birth of thalassemia major children;

(d) whether Government are aware that the part of the treatment is blood transfusion and whether any steps are being taken to strengthen the blood banks for this purpose; and

(e) whether any drugs are available in the country; if not, whether any steps have been taken to import such drugs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) A number of studies on the prevalence of thalassemis in various